A Guide to
Lead Entity Strategy Development

Salmon Recovery Funding Board
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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The intent of this document is to help lead entities, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the Board's Review Panel move toward a greater level of understanding regarding the purpose, content, and use of lead entity strategies.

The SRFB recognizes that some lead entities have had years of experience in salmon habitat recovery efforts and community engagement, while newer lead entities are in the early phases of strategy development and have had limited experience in these areas. In addition, lead entities have different levels of information about their watershed(s), varying degrees of technical and staff support, and different financial resources. The Review Panel and SRFB will take into consideration these differences when reviewing lead entity strategies and lists of proposed projects. However, lead entity strategies should always be based on the best available scientific information and understanding of local community interests. Strategies should establish priorities for actions in the watershed(s) and provide a project evaluation and ranking process based on these priorities. Lead entities should not submit projects that cannot be supported by their strategy. If a strategy is still in the early phases of development and is non-specific in terms of priority actions and areas in the watershed, proposed projects should be ones that are clearly beneficial to salmon and would clearly be priority projects in a more focused strategy (i.e., the proverbial "low hanging fruit"). If the strategy is more developed or focused in one area of the watershed or for one class of restoration or protection action, then proposed projects should be emphasized in these areas or actions.

What is a Strategy?

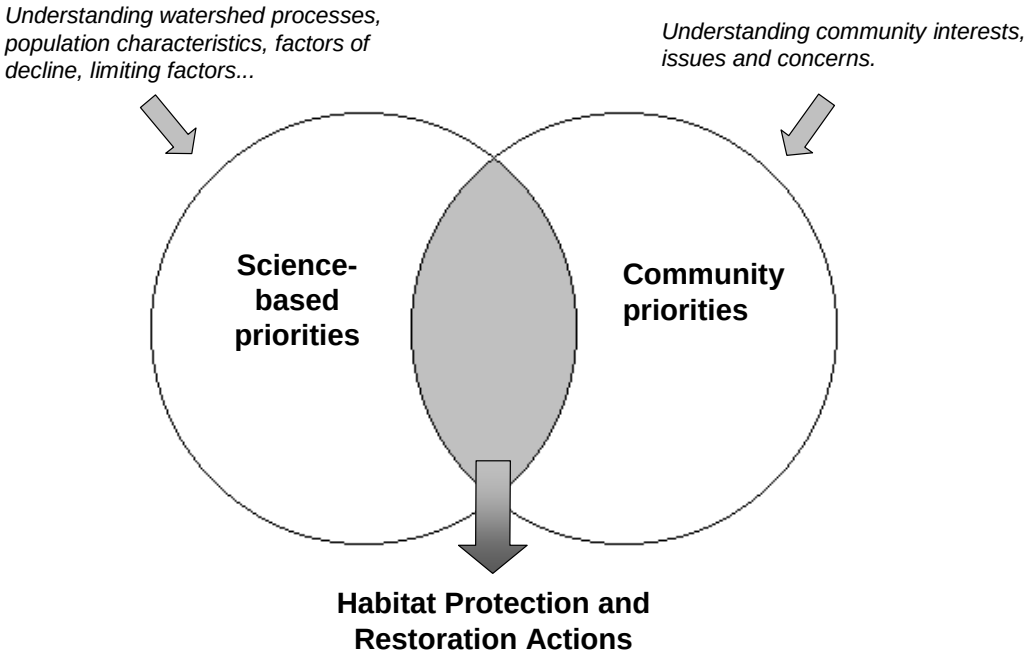
A lead entity strategy is a habitat protection and restoration action plan for the watershed(s) within the lead entity area. It provides a stepwise approach to how, where, and when to take action to restore and protect habitat and the watershed processes that are necessary to support salmon. It takes into consideration current knowledge and understanding of biological, physical, chemical, and ecological factors as well as community social, economic and cultural values and goals. The strategy provides guidance for specific actions over time and space in pursuit of established goals and desired outcomes.

Considering Community Interests

Figure 1 illustrates the concept of bridging the scientifically identified biological and ecological needs of salmon with community interests. Actions in the area where the two

circles overlap (shaded) are likely to be the best steps to take now while building support for salmon recovery in the community for the future. The SRFB wants to be assured that proposed projects are high priorities based on science and have the necessary support from interests of the community critical for implementation. SRFB encourages project lists that at least maintain the current support for salmon recovery at the local level and to the extent possible expand necessary community support to increase the overlap between community interests and the highest priority actions necessary for salmon.

Figure 1
Including Community Issues in Strategy Development



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION: REQUESTED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lead entity strategies may be structured in many different ways based upon local needs and interests. However, it is helpful for the SRFB, Review Panel and others to have information on strategies in a consistent manner. *The SRFB therefore will ask for the following information, in summary form, from each lead entity during the strategy review process.* Lead entities do not need to restructure their strategies to provide this information. If a lead entity strategy does not provide answers for any of the following questions, it should be so indicated. However, you are not required to develop new answers.

Scientific Information and Technical Foundation

1. What are the stocks and their status in your area?
2. What are the priorities and goals for these stocks? What is the technical basis for these decisions?
3. What are the limiting habitat feature(s) and/or watershed processes limiting recovery? Which are the most important ones?
4. What are the major actions necessary to protect and improve the stocks?
5. What are your priority actions and/or geographic areas based on scientific information? What is the basis for the priorities?

Community Interests

1. How do you assess community interests and support for actions necessary to protect and improve salmon stocks?
2. What types of biologically based high priority projects, geographic areas and actions currently enjoy the community support necessary for successful implementation? (In reference to Figure 1, where is the overlap in science-based priorities and community priorities?)
3. What types of biologically based high priority projects, geographic areas and actions do not currently enjoy the community support necessary for successful implementation and why?
4. Do you have a strategy or set of actions to increase the community support necessary for successful implementation of these priority actions and areas? If so, briefly describe the strategy and proposed actions.

Overall Approach to Guide Project Priorities

1. Based on the technical foundation and assessment of community interests, what actions, types of projects and areas are emphasized in your strategy?
2. How does your project ranking system support these priorities?

A GUIDE TO LEAD ENTITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This Guide is intended to provide lead entities with direction in developing, refining and using their strategies. It answers some basic questions about the purpose of strategies, reasons to improve them, their relation to regional recovery plans, and how they will evolve as regional recovery plans are completed and begin to be implemented. The Guide also offers an outline of one approach to strategy development that lead entities may choose to follow.

Primary Purposes for Lead Entity Strategies

- Guides project selection and ranking for SRFB funding.
- May guide project selection for funding other than SRFB (e.g. NFWF).
- Could be a guide for spending mitigation funds resulting from environmental permitting.
- Documents the scientific and community stakeholder priorities for restoration and protection of salmon habitat.
- Contributes to the habitat restoration and protection (non-regulatory) component of a regional salmon recovery plan.
- Contributes to the salmon habitat component of a sub-basin plan.
- Contributes to the non-regulatory component of the habitat element of watershed plans under RCW 90.82 (“2514”).
- Communicates to non-technical people, as well as project sponsors and community stakeholders the lead entity plan for salmon habitat protection and restoration.
- Provides information for the Habitat Work Schedule, which is required by RCW 77.85.060.

Elements of a Strategic Approach for Lead Entity Strategies

- Answers the question: With time constraints, resource constraints and financial constraints, what would you do first? What would you do next?
- Includes a rationale for priorities.
- Integrates the most important science-based actions benefiting salmon stocks with stakeholder needs/priorities in a collaborative process.
    - Prioritizing is a social endeavor, while science provides the information to help stakeholders decide on priorities.
- When possible, identifies specific portions of the watershed for focused efforts.

- To the extent feasible, identifies the personnel, monetary resources, and community support[1] necessary to implement actions identified in the strategy.
- Includes a strategy for garnering the community support necessary to implement high priority actions identified in the strategy.
- Includes a time frame for implementation that is consistent with available resources.

Reasons to Improve Strategies

A. First and foremost, the SRFB must ensure that funded projects and programs are scientifically sound. To this end, the SRFB seeks to increase certainty that a strategy and the resulting projects are scientifically sound.

B. To demonstrate how the lead entity intends to improve the alignment of community values[2] with scientifically established goals and objectives.

C. To increase community support[3] for the scientifically based priority projects in the priority geographic areas.

D. To improve consistency (and provide transparent linkages) between the project list and the strategy.

E. To improve the certainty that high priority projects developed at the local level are supported through the SRFB review process.

F. To foster the contribution of lead entity strategies to development of subbasin plans, watershed plans, and regional recovery plans.

G. To support the progression and evolution of lead entities and their strategies and project lists in concert with the development and implementation of recovery plans.

DEVELOPING FOCUSED LEAD ENTITY STRATEGIES

The Benefits of Focused Strategies

- Provides a consistent, defensible approach for addressing the needs of multiple forums (e.g. regional salmon recovery planning, permit mitigation, GMA, etc.).

[1] "Community support" could mean willing landowner(s), support by elected officials, a supportive economic sector (e.g. agriculture, forestry, tourism), or support from other people or entities affected by proposed actions.

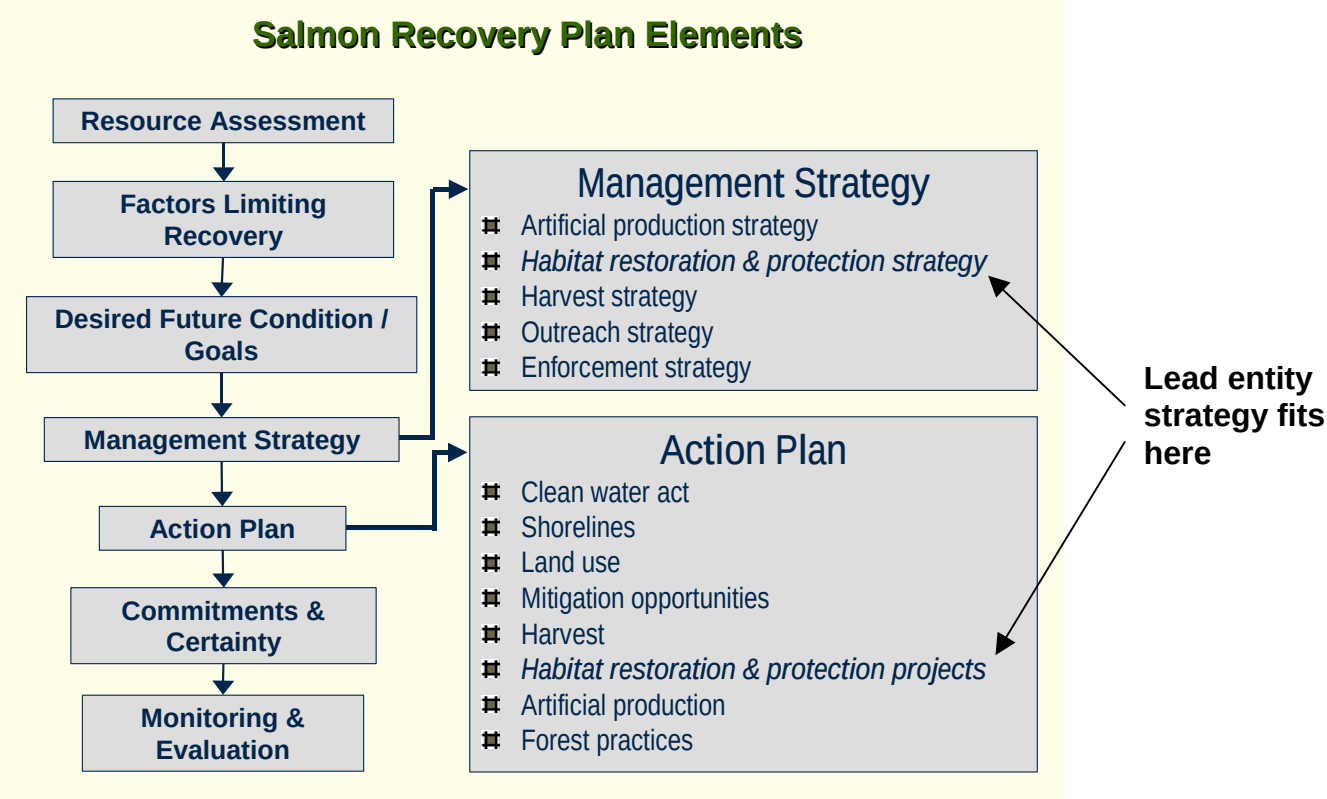
[2] "Community values" include social, cultural, economic and political values. Examples include values, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the role of government, private property rights, land use planning and regulation, economic use of land, and the value of endangered species.

[3] "Community support" could mean willing landowner(s), support by elected officials, a supportive economic sector (e.g. agriculture, forestry, and tourism), or support from other people or entities affected by proposed actions.

- Focuses actions to maximize the use of limited personnel (such as project sponsors and technical advisors) and financial resources
- Provides a higher likelihood that projects will be funded by the SRFB.
- Could provide the necessary assurances for SRFB targeted funding allocations.
- Provides objectives[4] against which to monitor progress.

How the Lead Entity Strategy Fits with a Regional Recovery Plan

Lead entity strategies form the basis of the habitat restoration and non-regulatory protection sections of a "4-H" recovery plan (see diagram below). Representing all of the habitat restoration and protection project priorities throughout a watershed, the lead entity strategy brings to the salmon recovery planning table the starting place for an integrated discussion of recovery actions in that watershed. It is possible that, through the recovery planning discussion, opportunities may surface that cause strategies to be updated.



The lead entity strategy provides the habitat restoration and nonregulatory habitat protection component of a regional salmon recovery plan. The strategy is guided by

[4] Objectives are *measurable, temporal, and spatial* in reference.

resource assessments and limiting factors analysis at the watershed level, and desired future conditions (recovery goals) and watershed priorities established (with the participation of the lead entity) at the regional level.

Evolution of Lead Entity Strategies

Strategies and their implementation will evolve as regional recovery plans are developed and implemented.

- The lead entity strategy(ies) becomes the nonregulatory habitat protection and restoration portion of the regional recovery plan. The lead entity list(s) become part of the regional recovery action plan. The lead entity's fish goals (and resulting habitat goals) may be general and tentative until they have been established at the regional level or by the co-managers at the watershed level.
- Regional recovery plans establish fish goals and priorities across watersheds.
- Lead entities use fish goals to develop watershed habitat goals, and in turn update restoration and protection priorities for the watershed.
- Lead entity project list(s) become part of the regional plan's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- Regional boards develop region-wide monitoring strategies coordinated with the state's Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and with the participation of lead entities and other watershed groups.
- Lead entities become more engaged in developing watershed-level monitoring strategies and may participate in monitoring and evaluation efforts at the watershed level.

Questions to Guide Lead Entity Strategy Development

The following questions were developed at the Lead Entity Strategy Workshop, April 3-4, 2002. Some questions, such as question 5, relate more to the process used in developing the strategy, while other questions should be addressed by the content of the strategy itself.

1. What are your vision (10-30 years out) and short and long-term goals for your watershed in relation to salmon habitat recovery? What is the gap between current and desired conditions?
2. What is your definition of recovery and how does it relate to the State and Federal definitions?
3. What is your conceptual approach or recovery philosophy and why did you choose it? (E.g. refugia/landscape ecology, worst first/triage, start where there is greatest support, etc.)

4. What are your high priority stocks, geographical areas, and actions? What process and criteria did you use to determine them?
5. What segments of the community and stakeholder groups were, or need to be, involved in developing your strategy?
6. What are the social, economic forces and scientific knowledge that limit or support your vision and goals? How will you address limiting forces and strengthen supportive forces where needed? How will you address and integrate socio-economic and scientific factors?
7. What are the technical and citizen's groups' roles in your strategy?
8. How will you foster and encourage project sponsors to participate in your high priority actions?
9. How does your strategy integrate with other existing policies, programs and regulations that can have a significant effect on salmon recovery?
10. What tools and resources did you/will you use to help implement your strategy? (E.g. GIS, habitat biology, senior planner, web specialist, etc.)
11. How will you measure progress and success? What are your measurement criteria?
12. How will you use your strategy beyond soliciting SRFB funding?

A STRATEGY OUTLINE

This outline provides guidance on how you may want to answer questions four (technical foundation) and six (community issues) and how to integrate the results in the context of available assessment and recovery information. The outline is summarized in Attachment 1.

Technical Foundation

1. **Identify stocks and determine their status.** Identify stocks in your watershed and determine which population viability characteristics (PVCs = abundance, productivity, diversity, and spatial distribution) are preventing/slowing the recovery of the stock(s). This is a scientific endeavor. Scientific information will dictate which PVCs need improvement in order to achieve the recovery of your priority stock(s). [Example: *The <u>abundance</u> of Summer Chum is low in our watershed, and the <u>productivity</u> of Chinook is very poor in our watershed.*]
2. **Prioritize stocks and establish goals.** Prioritize the salmonid stocks in your watershed and establish recovery goals. This is an endeavor based on policy, guided by both stakeholder input and scientific information. These decisions may be fairly general until NOAA Fisheries TRT's work has been completed and the goals component of a regional salmon recovery plan is available. [Example: *We will pursue the recovery of Summer Chum and Chinook in our watershed.*]

3. **Determine limiting habitat features and watershed processes.** Determine which habitat feature(s) and/or watershed processes are responsible for the poor PVCs you identified in step 2 above. This is a scientific endeavor. [Example: *The abundance of Summer Chum is low in our watershed because of high temperatures. The productivity of Chinook is very poor in our watershed because of high rates of sedimentation.*]
4. **Determine measures to improve targeted stocks.** Armed with knowledge about the habitat feature(s) and/or watershed processes that you identified in step 3 above, attempt to identify the primary underlying causes. (Some tools, such as EDT, include the "identification of causes" in the scientific model.) Identify all possible actions to remedy the causes you identified.
5. **Prioritize actions and areas.** Evaluate those possible actions and explain how you decided upon the most appropriate action(s) to pursue. In addition to the factors addressed above, consider:
   a. Current and potential abundance, productivity, population diversity, and population distribution,
   b. The potential to successfully eliminate the difference between current and potential PVCs, and
   c. The protection offered (or not offered) by current and anticipated land use regulations and practices.

   In most cases, priority actions will lead to specific areas in your watershed in which to work. Assemble these most appropriate actions (and associated areas) into an initial "TOP TIER[5]" of priority actions and areas using the information generated in steps 1-5. This will provide the greatest impact towards achieving recovery of the prioritized salmon stock(s). [Example: *The high temperatures that are limiting Summer Chum abundance in our watershed are due to the virtual elimination of riparian vegetation through the urbanized parts of X and Y subbasins. The high rates of sedimentation that are reducing the productivity of Chinook in our watershed are due to the extensive system of unpaved roads in Z subbasin.*]

Community Issues

A strategy needs to take into consideration community values. *Community values* include social, cultural, economic and political values as they relate to the actions necessary to achieve salmon recovery. For strategy development and project selection, community values are best addressed in terms of which restoration and protection actions will be supported by the community, and in what areas.

[5] Strive for a TOP TIER that contains actions and areas that cover a small percentage of the area in your watershed. The idea is for your TOP TIER to reflect those actions and areas that are *realistic* to address over the short term (1-5 years).

Community support could mean willing landowner(s), support by elected officials, a supportive economic sector (e.g. agriculture, forestry, and tourism), or support from other people or entities affected by proposed actions.

1. **Assess community interests, issues and concerns.** Try to achieve an understanding of how the community, segments of the community, or people in different areas of the watershed(s) feel about different types of habitat protection and restoration actions such as land acquisition or dike breaching.
2. **Identify areas, actions, project types, and projects that have community support.** Using your assessment of community values, issues and concerns, identify actions and areas that are likely to have community support and can be useful in building community support for habitat restoration and protection.

3. **Identify areas and actions where it will be necessary to build community support before taking action.** Using your understanding of community interests, issues and concerns, identify the high biological priority actions and areas where it might be beneficial to delay work until community support can be developed.

4. **Develop a strategy for building community support for high biologically based priority actions and areas.** Are there high priority actions or areas based on biological importance that do not have community support? If so, what types of actions are necessary to build that support? How will they be carried out?

Develop Priorities for Action

1. **Determine priority actions and associated areas based on both technical and community values.** It may be beneficial to modify priorities initially based on biological importance. The strategy document should include a rationale for both excluding and including actions and areas in the final TOP TIER.

   Develop a summary table of TOP TIER actions and areas (See Attachment II)

   a. Identify high priority stream reaches, shoreline segments/drift cells, estuaries (on the order of a few miles) wherein you will pursue the priority actions such as preservation, restoration, or strategy development or implementation (e.g., community outreach, reach-scale assessments, feasibility studies).

   b. Provide brief justification for each action and area in your table based on biological and community considerations.

   c. The Table of TOP TIER Actions should include priority actions over the short-term (1-5).
2. **Develop Project Ranking Criteria.** Create project evaluation and ranking criteria that will integrate the science and community goals and objectives delineated in your strategy and link them to your final, prioritized project list. Note that, although community support for a specific project may be important to the project's success, it

is more important to show how community support for the project will help build support for other high priority actions and areas identified in the strategy.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING LEAD ENTITY STRATEGIES

1. How should strategies address ESA-listed species? Non-listed species?

   Statute states that the SRFB shall "give preference to projects that… will benefit listed species and other fish species." SRFB policy currently states that the board will "give the greatest preference to lead entity strategies and project lists that benefit salmonid populations that are listed under the Endangered Species Act." Lead entities may use other priorities regarding targeted species when ranking projects but should document the reasons for doing so and recognize that this may result in a lower likelihood of receiving SRFB funding.

2. Should the strategy address "opportunistic" projects? Is it possible that an unanticipated project may emerge that has acceptable biological benefits and exceptional community value but is not in a priority area of the watershed? Should the strategy provide guidance on how to rank such a project high on the lead entity project list?

   Yes. Although each such project tends to be a special case, the strategy should provide guidance for what types of projects could be considered and how. If such a project is submitted to the SRFB for funding, the justification should be well documented.

3. Should the lead entity strategy and the project evaluation criteria take into consideration existing land use regulations and practices? For example, an area of the watershed that has been prioritized for protection may already be subject to land use regulations that are believed to be adequate to protect the resources identified in the strategy. A second example is a barrier removal project that will open up several miles of habitat, but the newly accessible habitat may is believed to have insufficient land use regulations to protect it from being degraded in future years.

   Each lead entity will have to decide how to address the relationship between existing and potential land use regulations and practices to its strategy and proposed projects. In project evaluation, the SRFB Technical Panel may consider the adequacy of regulatory protection in its rating of "benefits to salmon" and "certainty of success."

4. What criteria would the lead entity use to identify and prioritize data gaps in its strategy?

   Filling data gaps should be a high priority only if the data are necessary for the next phase of strategy development or are necessary for identifying and ranking projects.

5. Should lead entity strategies be useful for more than SRFB project prioritization?

   Yes. The strategy documents the local scientific and community stakeholder priorities for restoration and protection of salmon habitat in the watershed. The strategy should be useful for identifying projects for SRFB and other funding sources and for spending mitigation funds. It also should contribute to the salmon habitat component of subbasin and watershed plans and regional recovery plans. The strategy is also a communication tool, documenting the scientific and community stakeholder priorities for salmon habitat in the watershed and informing the community about proposed actions to protect and restore that habitat. The strategy also should inform the Habitat Work Schedule, required by RCW 77.85.060.

Attachment I
Lead Entity Strategy Development

Technical Foundation

1. Identify stocks, determine their status
2. Prioritize stocks and establish goals
3. Determine limiting factors, watershed processes
4. Determine measures to improve stocks
5. Prioritize actions, and when appropriate, geographic areas

Community Issues

1. Assess community interests, issues and concerns
2. Identify areas, actions, projects types, projects that have community support
3. Identify where it will be necessary to build community support before taking action
4. Develop a strategy for building community support for high priority actions and areas

Develop Priorities For Action

1. Establish the overlap of science-based priorities and community priorities
2. Determine priority actions and associated areas
3. Develop a strategy for building community support where needed
4. Develop project ranking criteria

Attachment II: Example of Top Tier of Actions and Areas

Reach	Species	Habitat Type	Recommended Action	Actions/Needs	Rationale	Comments
Salmon River (RM 1.7-3.5)	Threatened chinook, coho, and steelhead	Spawning and rearing	Acquisition and restoration	Purchase floodplain area and restore connectivity to river	50% of spawning occurs in this highly productive reach.	EDT indicates that restoration could result in a 70% increase in production
Canyon Creek subbasin	Threatened chinook, steelhead	Spawning and rearing	Restoration	Reduce sedimentation from road-related erosion on county, private, and USFS roads.	Formerly most productive watershed for threatened chinook, but sediment from landslides and road erosion have reduced spawning by 60% over past 10 years	Professional judgment of local biologists is that sediment inputs have cemented and buried redds and filled holding pools and is limiting factor for recovery of stock.
Bear River Estuary	Threatened chinook, coho, chum, pink, and steelhead	Rearing	Acquisition and restoration	Purchase land at head of estuary, remove levees, and conduct restoration	The Bear River estuary supports multiple stocks of salmon, has high production potential, and is critical rearing area for threatened chinook.	Acquisition and restoration will require significant work with landowners and may take decades, but potential productivity makes this a critical area for salmon recovery
Cub Creek	Threatened chinook, coho	Rearing	Restoration	Address fish passage problems, reconnect and restore off-channel habitat, and provide example of partnership with agricultural community.	Chinook rearing is limited in this small watershed, but potential to engage important segment of community in a lower profile setting.	Opportunity to conduct pilot project with local farmers that could be used as a template for use in areas more important to salmon recovery
Bear River A (RM 4.0-7.5)	Threatened chinook, chum, coho, steelhead	Spawning and rearing	Assessment	Feasibility studies and community outreach are needed to determine opportunities and costs for potential restoration	Potential for great increases in productivity for threatened chinook and other salmon, but development of options require more site-specific information	If feasibility study indicates good potential for success, acquisition and restoration of this reach should be considered a high priority
Bear River B (RM 12.1-13.8)	Threatened chinook, coho, steelhead	Spawning and rearing	Protection	Protect floodplain and riparian corridor	Significant amount of off-channel rearing habitat in this high production stream with mature forest floodplain at risk of future development.	Fee simple acquisition is the preferred option, but conservation easements may also provide similar protection at lower cost.

Example Map of Priority Actions and Areas